

**WILLIAMSBURG CITY COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
August 5, 2002**

The Williamsburg City Council held a work session on August 5, 2002, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Stryker Building.

**ATTENDANCE**

Present were Ms. Zeidler, Messrs. Genakos, Haulman, Houghland, and Tabb. Also present were City Manager Tuttle, City Attorney Phillips, and City Clerk Crist.

Staff Attending: Phil Serra, Director of Finance, Greg Thacker, Assessor, and Assistant to the City Manager Jodi Miller

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Zeidler called the meeting to order

**OPEN FORUM**

Mayor Zeidler opened the session for public comment.  
No one wished to speak. The session was closed.

**BACKGROUND PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION**

**Presentation on November Referendum, Jimmy Eason, President and CEO of Hampton Roads Partnership**

Reference for this item was Mr. Tuttle's report dated August 1, 2002, and a copy of the Hampton Roads Partnership's report Transportation Challenges and Opportunities. On June 13, 2002, Council adopted Resolution #02-09, in support of the November 2002 Referenda.

Mayor Zeidler introduced Mr. Jimmy Eason, President and CEO of the HRP to discuss the referendum question concerning additional sales and use tax of one percent being imposed, with revenues to be used solely for regional transportation projects and programs.

Mr. Eason gave a brief overview of the Hampton Roads Partnership that was founded in 1996 for the purpose of addressing economic and competitiveness issues. The HRP board consists of members representing a broad cross section of Hampton Roads. The Partnership's Strategic Plan ranked Transportation one of two of the most important issues for the area. The report Transportation Challenges and Opportunities was prepared to provide assistance to those involved in the education process for this campaign. It is simple and easy to read. Mr. Eason provided a brief review of the information in the report and especially noted the key points for the transportation referendum listed under Tab 1:

1. Hampton Roads has significant transportation needs and they can only be solved on a regional basis.
2. An open and collaborative process has identified the six most important projects and the means to pay for them.
3. There are consequences to the region and its citizens if the referendum fails.

Mr. Eason said that the materials provided under tabs two through five of the report give additional information about each of the key points.

Mayor Zeidler thanked Mr. Eason for coming to the meeting. The booklet is thorough and is well done. Copies will be made available for the public at the library.

Council members and Mr. Eason discussed the referendum:

1. Mr. Houghland was concerned about passage. He commended the Chamber of Commerce for their support of the referendum, and suggested that Mr. Eason attend another Council meeting closer to election time.
2. Mr. Eason commended the Mayor for meeting with community leaders in July.
3. Mr. Eason explained the process for selecting the projects most beneficial to the region.
4. Mr. Haulman commented that he was not fond of using sales tax and would prefer a user fee. He was pleased with the results for Interstate 64.
5. Mr. Genakos applauded the work of the Partnership and Planning District Commission. Mr. Eason explained that some of the media opposition to the referendum came about because some people opposed the increase in sales tax or any revenue source.
6. The sales tax would be imposed until the projects are paid off.

Council members were appreciative of Mr. Eason's presence and his report, and concurred in their support for this referendum. The Mayor commented that the two additional referendum items concerning Higher Education and Parks and Recreation, would help protect our future.

### **Prince George Parking Garage—Update**

Reference for this item was Mr. Tuttle's report dated August 1, 2002, regarding the status of the proposed construction and related matters. Mr. Tuttle said the bid opening for the garage would be held on Monday, August 26, with a recommendation for award of the contract being placed on Council's September agenda. The city continues its work to acquire a number of parcels important to the garage development, as well as to obtain easements, and relocate utilities and parking. Colonial Williamsburg's archaeological work should be completed in early September. The city will put out a Request for Proposals for construction management. Mr. Tuttle said construction should start in early October and take about twelve months to complete.

Mayor Zeidler thanked Mr. Tuttle for his report. Mr. Tuttle will provide periodic updates to Council on the progress of the garage.

### **Presentation on Real Estate Tax Assessment, Greg Thacker, Assessor—Verbal Update**

At their July 11 meeting, Council asked staff to make a presentation regarding tax assessments.

Mr. Thacker said that reassessments were done as of July 1. He provided background information about fair market value assessments and equity of assessments. Using an overhead presentation, he reviewed:

1. The Annual Reassessment Cycle
2. A Map of Residential Neighborhoods
3. A Map of Commercial Neighborhoods
4. Total Taxable Real Estate
5. Annual Sales Ratio Study
6. Total Parcel Count

Mr. Thacker pointed out that townhouse and condominium developments, as well as new single-family subdivisions, contributed to the parcel increase. Property values have increased and as a result, assessments increased. Assessments always lag behind market values.

Council members and Mr. Thacker discussed:

1. How the city's ratio compares with other neighboring jurisdictions. James City County's ratio is 90%.
2. Mr. Thacker explained that if there are three home sales in a neighborhood, he reacts to reassess that area. The elements considered for an assessment are quality, condition, size, and location.
3. Mr. Genakos was concerned about the impact on older and lower income residents when property taxes increase due to higher assessments, and suggested that this may need to be addressed at the State level.
4. The appeal process through the Board of Equalization.
5. The suggestion that perhaps an advocacy group is needed to assist residents when they have a problem with an assessment or increase in taxes. Mr. Phillips cautioned that there is a fine line between helping and practicing law without a license. Mayor Zeidler said the Neighborhood Association might be able to assist in some way. Mr. Haulman noted that values might increase overall in an area, even though a particular property is not improved, which would raise assessments and taxes.
6. Mr. Thacker defined "equity" as similar properties having similar assessments.

Mr. Tuttle agreed to look into mechanisms for assisting citizens. Mayor Zeidler thanked Mr. Thacker for his presentation.

### **PREVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING –August 8, 2002**

Council members received a copy of the August 8 agenda.

Mr. Tuttle said the Financial and Monthly Reports were just distributed, as well as a packet of information regarding the agenda item "Rental Housing Registration and Inspection Program." The information will be put on the city's website and a hard copy will be available to the public. As part of the review process, this item will be discussed at the August 8 meeting, but no action will be required.

### **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS—August 2002**

Williamsburg Farmers' Market: Mr. Tuttle commended Paul Hudson, Jodi Miller, and Market Manager Libby Oliver for the success of the market. Average attendance has been 200

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people, with an income of \$7,000 per Saturday. He noted there is plenty of free parking available.

**Appointment to Boards and Commission  
Industrial Development Authority**

*Mr. Haulman Moved That City Council Appoint **Mr. David R. Schultz** to the Industrial Development Authority to Serve the Unexpired Term of Mr. Fred Schwartz, Effective Immediately to Expire June 08, 2004. The Motion Was Seconded by Mr. Houghland.*

*Recorded Vote on the Motion:*

*Aye: Genakos, Haulman, Zeidler, Houghland, Tabb.*

*No: None*

**OPEN FORUM**

Mayor Zeidler opened the session for public comment.  
No one wished to speak. The session was closed.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Houghland Moved that City Council go into Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for the purpose of discussing one property matter per subparagraph 3, concerning acquisition of property of which discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect bargaining or negotiation strategy of public body, and one legal matter per subparagraph 7 for the purpose of consultation on specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by counsel. The Motion was Seconded by Mr. Tabb.

Recorded Vote on the Motion:

Aye: Genakos, Haulman, Zeidler, Houghland, Tabb

No: None

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m. (Mayor Zeidler called a five-minute recess.)

At 4:29 p.m., Council met in Open Session.

Mr. Houghland Moved the Certification of Closed Meeting. The Motion was Seconded by Mr. Tabb.

Recorded Vote on the Motion:

Aye: Genakos, Haulman, Zeidler, Houghland, Tabb

No: None

**CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

Date: August 5, 2002

Motion: Houghland Second: Mr. Tabb

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WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Williamsburg has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the City Council that such meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Williamsburg hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed or considered by the City of Williamsburg.

VOTE:

Aye: Genakos, Haulman, Zeidler, Houghland, Tabb

No: None

Absent During Vote: None

Absent During Meeting: None

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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Clerk of Council

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Mayor

*Approved September 12, 2002*